

REMARKS

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-17 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 are independent.

Claim 9 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bennett (US Patent No. 4,591,983), and further in view of Sakayori (US Patent No. 6,336,078).

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Bennett and further in view of Sakayori and further in view of Kavanagh (US Patent No. 5,838,965).

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bennett, Sakayori, and further in view of Lee (US Patent No. 4,610,000).

Claims 12, 15, 16, and 17 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bennett, Sakayori, and further in view of Call (US Patent No. 6,154,738).

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bennett, Sakayori, and further in view of Shiell (US Patent No. 5,950,012).

Claims 1-7 and 9-17 are amended.

Thus, claims 1-8 and 10-17 remain pending for reconsideration, which is respectfully requested.

No new matter has been added in this Amendment. The foregoing rejections are hereby traversed.

OBJECTED TO CLAIM 9

Objected to dependent claim 9 is amended into independent form incorporating the features of the claims from which claim 9 depends, and therefore now allowable. Claim 9 is also further amended to recite, "permission of quotation of a catalog of parts constituting said product based upon the hardware and firmware development data," for clarity by tying the claim elements together.

PRIOR ART**Bennet**

The independent claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 are rejected over Bennet and Sakayori. The Examiner primarily relies on Bennet to reject the independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11, and relies on Sakayori to assert that a client-server environment is well known.

The independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 are amended to clarify the patentably distinguishing features of the present invention by reciting,

a storage unit storing hardware and firmware related
electronized components as a hardware and firmware component
knowledge database, each electronized component being
electronized information generated during a product design,
 development, including manufacture, and inspection, data
~~generated to constitute a product, as a component development~~
~~knowledge data base,~~

wherein the hardware and firmware electronized
components include at least one of a drawing of a hardware
constituting the product, a firmware, a program, a specification,
and a contract for the product, as the electronized information, and

Support for the claim amendments can be found, for example, on page 17, line 14-25.

In contrast to the claimed invention, Bennet relates to a hierarchical knowledge system in which a plurality of elements (or a set of elements) of a system or product are classified into a plurality of subsets of the element, the subsets associated with each other over a plurality of hierarchical levels. In other words, in Bennet, the hierarchical elements are simply hierarchical representations for assembling a product and specifying functions performed by the product (see, column 3, line 50 to column 4, line 60). The Examiner relies on Bennet's FIG. 2 and 3, which are a hierarchical representation of assembling a computer and a functional hierarchy for the computer, respectively (column 5, lines 9-12). In summary, Bennet relates to inventory control and processing orders for flexibly assembled systems or item of manufacture (column 1, lines 5-10). The Bennet disclosure lines referred to by the Examiner, such as column 3, 5, 7, 27, relate to representing the relationship between the various elements of the product or the structure of the product. Bennet does not disclose or suggest managing electronized information, such as documents, programs, firmware, contract, etc., generated as part of developing a product (i.e., "each electronized component being electronized information generated during product design, development, manufacture, and inspection," claim 1).

In contrast to Bennet, the claimed invention relates to a component management system in which a "component" is electronized information, such as a drawing, a firmware, program, or a contract document, that is generated as part of design/development of a product. Accordingly, the claimed hardware and firmware "components," as described in line 20 on page 4, line 4 to page 5 of the specification, are, for example, design drawings and the like relating to the hardware and various kinds of specifications relating to the firmware. Further, as described in lines 20 to 25 on page 17 of the specification, a "component" is a thing generated in processes from the development/design of a product to the manufacture thereof and can be electronized, such as the drawing of a hardware constituting the product, a firmware, various kinds of programs, a specification, a contract document, and the like. Bennet merely discloses a database hierarchy representing the relationship between various elements of the product or structure of the product, as shown in FIG. 3 of Bennet. Bennet does not disclose or suggest anything about integrally managing the generated development "components" of a product, as recited in the amended claims, by associating the "components" hierarchically (i.e., "wherein said hardware and said firmware components constituting said product are at a same management level," independent claims 1, 2, 9, 10, and 11).

One of the benefits of the claimed invention, as provided in page 82, line 16 to page 84, line 13 of the specification, is that since, for example, the hardware and firmware are regarded as the same management level and a plurality of "components" (i.e., electronized information generated in development) related to both hardware and firmware are managed in a unified manner, it is possible to improve the management efficiency of the version number of the components and the management efficiency of the components and to prevent a working error, as compared with the conventional management in which "components" related to the hardware and firmware are separately managed.

Sakayori, Kavanagh, Lee, Call, and Shiell do not relate to and/or do not disclose or suggest the present invention's claimed recitation of a "component" management system, which provides, "storing hardware and firmware related electronized components as a hardware and firmware component knowledge database, each electronized component being electronized information generated during a product design, development, manufacture, and inspection, wherein the hardware and firmware electronized components include at least one of a drawing of a hardware constituting the product, a firmware, a program, a specification, and a contract for the product, as the electronized information." In other words, none of the relied upon references, including Bennet and Sakayori, disclose or suggest managing "each electronized


component being electronized information generated during product design, development, manufacture, and inspection," such as electronic documents, programs, firmware, electronic contracts, etc.

In view of the claim amendments and the remarks, withdrawal of the objection to dependent claim 9, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-8 and 10-17, and allowance of claims 1-17 is respectfully requested.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,
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